SERIAL STORY

EXCUSE ME!

Novelized from the Comedy of the Same Name

By Rupert Hughes

ILLUSTRATED From Photographs of the Play as Produced By Henry W. Savage

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SYNOPSIS.

Lieut. Harry Mallory is ordered to the Philippines. He and Marjorie Newton decide to elope, but wreck of taxicab prevents their seeing minister on the way to the train. Transcontinental train is starting on passengers. Porter has a lively time with an Englishman and Ira Lathrop, a Yankee business man. The elopers have an exciting time getting to the train. "Little Jimmie" Wellington, bound for Reno to get a divorce, boards train in maudlin condition. Later Mrs. Jimmie appears. She is also bound for Reno with same object. Likewise Mrs. Sammy Whitcomb. Latter blames Mrs. Jimmie for her marital troubles. Classmates of Mallory decorate bridal berth. Rev. and Mrs. Temple start on a vacation. They decide to cut loose and Temple removes evidence of his calling. Marjorie decides to let Mallory proceed alone, but train starts while they are lost in farewell. Passengers join Mallory's classmates in giving couple wedding hazing. Marjorie is distracted. Ira Lathrop, woman-hating bachelor, discovers an old sweetheart, Annie Gattle, a fellow passenger. Mallory vainly hunts for a preacher among the passengers. Mrs. Wellington hears Little Jimmie's voice. Later she meets Mrs. Whitcomb. Mallory reports to Marjorie his failure to find a preacher. They decide to pretend a quarrel and Mallory finds a vacant berth. Mrs. Jimmie discovers Wellington on the train. Mallory again makes an unsuccessful hunt for a preacher. Dr. Temple poses as a physician. Mrs. Temple is induced by Mrs. Wellington to smoke a cigar. Sight of preacher on a station platform raises Mallory's hopes, but he takes another train. Missing hand baggage compels the couple to borrow from passengers. Jimmie gets a cinder in his eye and Mrs. Jimmie gives first aid. Coolness is then resumed. Still no clergyman. More borrowing. Dr. Temple puzzled by behavior of different couples. Marjorie's jealousy aroused by Mallory's baseball jargon. Marjorie suggests wrecking the train in hopes that accident will produce a preacher. Also tries to induce the conductor to hold the train so she can shop.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Dog-on Dog Again.

As the conductor left the Mallorys to their own devices, it rushed over him anew what sacrilege had been attempted—a fool bride had asked him to stop the Trans-American of all trains!—to go shopping of all things!

He stormed into the smoking room to open the safety valve of his wrath, and found the porter just coming out of the buffet cell with a tray, two hollow-stemmed glasses and a bottle swaddled in a napkin.

"Say, Ellsworth, what in —— do you suppose that female back there wants?—wants me to hold the Trans-American while—"

But the porter was in a flurry himself. He was about to serve champagne, and he cut the conductor short:

"'Scuse me, boss, but they's a lovin' couple in the stateroom forward that is in a powerful hurry for this. I can't talk to you now. I'll see you later." And he swaggered off, leaving the door of the buffet open. The conductor paused to close it, glanced in, started, stared, glared, roared: "What's this! Well, I'll be—a dog smuggled in here! I'll break that coon's head. Come out of there, you miserable or'nary hound." He seized the incredulous Snoozleums by the scruff of his neck, growling, "It's you for the baggage car ahead," and dashed out with his prey, just as Mallory, now getting new bearings on Marjorie's character, spoke across the rampart of his Napoleonically folded arms:

"Well, you're a nice one!—making violent love to a conductor before my very eyes. A minute more and I would have—"

She silenced him with a snap: "Don't you speak to me! I hate you! I hate all men. The more I know men the more I like—" this reminded her, and she asked anxiously: "Where is Snoozleums?"

Mallory, impatient at the shift of subject, snapped back: "Oh, I left him in the buffet with the waiter. What I want to know is how you dare to—"

"Was it a colored waiter?"

"Of course. But I'm not speaking of—"

"But suppose he should bite him?"

"Oh, you can't hurt those nigger waiters. I started to say—"

"But I can't have Snoozleums biting colored people. It might not agree with him. Get him at once."

Mallory trembled with suppressed rage like an overloaded boiler, but he gave up and growled: "Oh, Lord, all right. I'll get him when I've finished—"

"Go get him this minute. And bring the poor darling back to his mother."

"His mother! Ye gods!" cried Mallory, wildly. He turned away and dashed into the men's room with a furious: "Where's that damned dog?"

He met the porter just returning. The porter smiled: "He's right in heah, sir," and opened the buffet door. His eyes popped and his jaw sagged: "Why, I lef' him here just a minute ago."

"You left the window open, too," Mallory observed. "Well, I guess he's gone."

The porter was panic-stricken: "Oh, I'm turrible sorry, boss, I wouldn't have lost dat dog for a fortune. If you was to hit me with a axe I wouldn't mind."

To his utter befuddlement, Mallory grinned and winked at him, and murmured: "Oh, that's all right. Don't worry." And actually laid half a dollar in his palm. Leaving the black lids batting over the starting eyes, Mallory pulled his smile into a long face and went back to Marjorie like an undertaker: "My love, prepare yourself for bad news."

Marjorie looked up, startled and apprehensive: "Snoozleums is ill. He did bite the darkey."

"Worse than that—he—he—fell out of the window."

"When!" she shrieked, "in heaven's name—when?"

"He was there just a minute ago, the waiter says."

Marjorie went into instant hysterics, wringing her hands and sobbing: "Oh, my darling, my poor child—stop the train at once!"

She began to pound Mallory's shoulders and shake him frantically. He had never seen her this way either. He was getting his education in advance. He tried to calm her with inexpert words: "How can I stop the train? Now, dearie, he was a nice dog, but after all, he was only a dog."

She rounded on him like a panther: "Only a dog! He was worth a dozen men like you. You find the conductor at once, command him to stop this train—and back up! I don't care if he has to go back ten miles. Run, tell him at once. Now, you run!"

Mallory stared at her as if she had gone mad, but he set out to run somewhere, anywhere. Marjorie paced up and down distractedly, tearing her hair and moaning, "Snoozleums, Snoozleums! My child. My poor child!" At length her wildly roving eyes noted the bell rope. She stared, pondered, nodded her head, clutched at it, could not reach it, jumped for it several times in vain, then seized a chair, swung it into place, stood up in it, gripped the rope, and came down on it with all her weight, dropping to the floor and jumping up and down in a frenzied dance. In the distance the engine could be heard faintly whistling, whistling for every pull.

The engineer, far ahead, could not imagine what unheard-of crisis could bring about such mad signals. The fireman yelled:

"I bet that crazy conductor is attacked with an epilettic fit."

But there was no disputing the command. The engine was reversed, the air brakes set, the sand run out and every effort made to pull the iron horse, as it were, back on its haunches.

The grinding, squealing, jolting, shook the train like an earthquake. The shrieking of the whistle froze the blood like a woman's cry of "Murder!" in the night. The women among the passengers echoed the screams. The men turned pale and braced themselves for the shock of collision. Some of them were mumbling prayers. Dr. Temple and Jimmie Wellington, with one idea in their dissimilar souls, dashed from the smoking room to go to their wives.

Ashton and Wedgewood, with no one to care for but themselves, seized windows and tried to fight them open. At last they budged a sash and knelt down to thrust their heads out.

"I don't see a beastly thing ahead," said Wedgewood, "except the heads of other fools."

"We're slowing down though," said Ashton, "she stops! We're safe. Thank God!" And he collapsed into a chair. Wedgewood collapsed into another, gasping: "Whatevah are we safe from, I wondah?"

The train-crew and various passengers descended and ran alongside the train asking questions. Panic gave way to mystery. Even Dr. Temple came back into the smoking room to finish a precious cigar he had been at work on. He was followed by Little Jimmie, who had not quite reached his wife when the stopping of the train put an end to his excuse for chivalry. He was regretfully mumbling:

"It would have been such a good shansh to shave my life's wife—I mean my—I don't know what I mean." He sank into a chair and ordered a drink; then suddenly remembered his vow, and with great heroism, rescinded the order.

Mallory, finding that the train was checked just before he reached the conductor, saw that official's bewildered wrath at the stoppage and had a fearsome intuition that Marjorie had somehow done the deed. He hurried back to the observation room, where he found her charging up and down, still distraught. He paused at a safe distance and said:

"The train has stopped, my dear. Somebody rang the bell."

"I guess somebody did!" Marjorie answered, with a proud toss of the head. "Where's the conductor?"

"He's looking for the fellow that pulled the rope."

"You go tell him to back up—and slowly, too."

"No, thank you!" said Mallory. He was a brave young man, but he was not bearding the conductors of stopped expresses. Already the conductor's voice was heard in the smoking room, where he appeared with the rush and roar of a Bashan bull. "Well!" he bellowed, "which one of you guys pulled that rope?"

"It was nobody here, sir," Dr. Temple meekly explained. The conductor transfixed him with a baleful glare: "I wouldn't believe a gambler on oath. I bet you did it."

"I assure you, sir," Wedgewood interposed, "he didn't touch it. I was heah."

The conductor waved him aside and charged into the observation room, followed by all the passengers in an awe-struck rabble. Here, too, the conductor thundered: "Who pulled that rope? Speak up somebody."

Mallory was about to sacrifice himself to save Marjorie, but she met the conductor's black rage with the withering contempt of a young queen: "I pulled the old rope. Whom did you suppose?"

The conductor almost dropped with apoplexy at finding himself with nobody to vent his immense rage on, but this pink and white slip. "You!" he gulped, "well, what in— Say, in the name of—why, don't you know it's a penitentiary offense to stop a train this way?"

Marjorie tossed her head a little higher, grew a little calmer: "What do I care? I want you to back up."

The conductor was reduced to a wet rag, a feeble echo: "Back up—the train up?"

"Yes, back the train up," Marjorie answered, resolutely, "and go slowly till I tell you to stop."

The conductor stared at her a moment, then whirled on Mallory: "Say, what in hell's the matter with your wife?"

Mallory was saved from the problem of answering by Marjorie's abrupt change from a young Tsarina rebuking a serf, to a terrified mother. She flung out imploring palms and with a gush of tears pleaded: "Won't you please back up? My darling child fell off the train."

The conductor's rage fell away in an instant. "Your child fell off the train!" he gasped. "Good Lord! How old was he?"

With one hand he was groping for the bell cord to give the signal, with the other he opened the door to look back along the track.

"He was two years old," Marjorie sobbed.

"Oh, that's too bad!" the conductor groaned. "What did he look like?"

"He had a pink ribbon round his neck."

"A pink ribbon—oh, the poor little fellow! the poor little fellow!"

"And a long curly tail."

The conductor swung round with a yell: "A curly tail!—your son?"

"My dog!" Marjorie roared back at him.

The conductor's voice cracked weakly as he shrieked: "Your dog! You stopped this train for a fool dog?"

"He wasn't a fool dog," Marjorie retorted, facing him down, "he knows more than you do."

The conductor threw up his hands: "Well, don't you women beat—" He studied Marjorie as if she were some curious freak of nature. Suddenly an idea struck into his daze: "Say, what kind of a dog was it?—a measly little cheese-hound?"

"He was a noble, beautiful soul with wonderful eyes and adorable ears."

The conductor was growing weaker and weaker: "Well, don't worry. I got him. He's in the baggage car."

Marjorie stared at him unbelievingly. The news seemed too gloriously beautiful to be true. "He isn't dead—Snoozleums is not dead!" she cried, "he lives! He lives! You have saved him." And once more she flung herself upon the conductor. He tried to bat her off like a gnat, and Mallory came to his rescue by dragging her away and shoving her into a chair. But she saw only the noble conductor: "Oh, you dear, good, kind angel. Get him at once."

"He stays in the baggage car," the conductor answered, firmly and as he supposed, finally.

"But Snoozleums doesn't like baggage cars," Marjorie smiled. "He won't ride in one."

"He'll ride in this one or I'll wring his neck."

"You fiend in human flesh!" Marjorie shrank away from him in horror, and he found courage to seize the bell rope and yank it viciously with a sardonic: "Please, may I start this train?"

The whistle tooted faintly. The bell began to hammer, the train to creak and writhe and click. The conductor pulled his cap down hard and started forward. Marjorie seized his sleeve: "Oh, I implore you, don't consign that poor sweet child to the horrid baggage car. If you have a human heart in your breast, hear my prayer."

The conductor surrendered unconditionally: "Oh, Lord, all right, all right. I'll lose my job, but if you'll keep quiet, I'll bring him to you." And he slunk out meekly, followed by the passengers, who were shaking their heads in wonderment at this most amazing feat of this most amazing bride.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Cure.

Miss Fay Templeton, at a supper at the Ritz-Carlton in New York given in honor of her return to the stage, praised the American business man.

"I have only one fault to find with him," she said. "He works too hard. Hence, of an evening, he is sometimes a little dull.

"But intelligent wives can soon cure their husbands of overworking. I know a wife—she and her good man are in Egypt now—who came down to dinner one night in a somber black robe.

"Her husband—a frightfully overworked millionaire—looked at her costume and exclaimed:

"'Why on earth, my love, are you wearing a dress like that? It's positively half-mourning.'

"'Of course it's half mourning,' she replied. 'When you come home from the office, don't you always complain that you're half dead?'"

Rare Muskrat Trapped.

An albino muskrat, white as snow, with pink eyes, was trapped in the big Pierce swamp near Fairfield, N. J., the first ever caught in that state.

DOWN THE AMAZON ON A RAFT

VILLAGE ON LOWER AMAZON

RAVENOUS whirlpools, tigers, sharks, cannibals and malaria are incidents of an amazing voyage of 4,000 miles made by a St. Louisan, part of the way on a fragile raft from near the source to the mouth of the Amazon, which is the longest river in the world. The marvel of the trip is increased by the fact that for most of the journey he was without money.

The hero of the adventure is Frank B. Farrar of St. Louis, a mining engineer. His thrilling story, with humorous episodes, is told in his own words.

I left home in February, 1906, under contract to take charge of placer mines in the interior of Bolivia. The company by which I was employed left me stranded and unpaid at La Paz, Bolivia, in debt to a hotel $200 for board and lodging. Unable to pay, I stole off in the night, stowed away on a boat crossing Lake Titicaca (which, 11,000 feet above the sea level, is said to be the highest lake in the world), and so made my way to Peru.

Here, with varying fortunes, I obtained work which occupied me for more than three years. I was employed at various times by the Peruvian Railroad corporation and by different mining companies. I was at one time superintendent of the Yanimina camp, 16,600 feet above sea level, in the Andes, and rich in copper and silver.

In the fall of 1910 I went to Lima, the Paris of South America, and passed three months. I also spent all of the money I had saved, not foreboding that I was soon to fall ill. I obtained work in a lead smelter at Huancayo and became poisoned with the metal. It was then that I determined to make my way to Yquitos, a city on the upper Amazon, to which, although 3,fi000 miles from the coast, ocean steamers penetrate. I expected there to obtain passage to New York. It was 1,000 miles from Oroya, where my journey started, to Yquitos.

Two Hundred Miles Through Forest.

At Oroya I met a locomotive engineer named Paddy O'Neil, who was out of employment, and, like myself, without a penny. He decided to go with me to Yquitos, where he had heard there was plenty of work.

The first leg of the trip was a 200-mile walk over the mountains to the Pachitea river, which is the beginning of the Amazon. This tramp was 15 days of nightmare. We followed a government trail through the impenetrable forests, in which at nights we could hear the roars of tigers and jaguars. We subsisted by begging from the natives whose huts we encountered. On the ninth day we were so nearly famished that I took O'Neil's watch, walked back ten miles on the trail and sold it for $4. With the money I bought a bag of corn and lima beans, on which we lived for the rest of the "hike."

We passed several "tambos," or government posts, in which we were permitted to sleep, but the officers of which never thought of inviting us to eat. At last we reached the river, and O'Neil built a raft of logs twelve feet long and five feet wide, surmounted by a bamboo platform, on which we were to sit to keep ourselves dry. The logs were tied together with the bark of the balza tree. We had no paddles, but only long poles.

The Pachitea river at that time was narrow, but very swift, and there were many logs floating on its surface. It seemed as if our raft perversely insisted upon striking every one of these logs, and at each collision I feared that the craft would go to pieces. Once it struck a stump and turned a complete somersault, flinging us into the water.

Our danger was extreme. The water was infested with venomous snakes, alligators and fresh water sharks. It was impracticable to swim ashore, because the dense tropical bamboo forests would not permit us to land, so thickly did they grow. But if we could have landed we should have been at the mercy of wild beasts. There was nothing to do but swim after the raft, which was floating swiftly down the current.

After great efforts we overtook it, and in a few days reached Porto Vermudis, where there is the first of a string of wireless telegraph stations extending to the coast.

Here O'Neil and I both fell ill of malaria. Despite the fact that we could scarcely lift our heads, the native hotelkeeper made us cut down trees to pay for the scraps of food he doled out to us. There was no medicine available. A native woman, struck with pity for me, took up a collection of money to buy me a ticket to the village of Marecasas, 50 miles down the river. O'Neil got a job as engineer on the same launch on which I traveled, but was put ashore because he was too ill to perform his duties.

Monkey Saved Farrar's Life.

Here I should have died but for a monkey, the property of an unfeeling native, the keeper of a hotel into whose tender mercies I fell. Although I was shaking violently with chills, he said to me:

"You've got to go to work." I protested and begged for quinine. "If you don't work," he replied, "I'll put you in the stocks." I was too sick to care, and told him to go ahead.

The stock, an instrument of torture, consisted of a framework with holes through which my feet, arms and head were thrust. For two days and nights I sat in this machine, alternately freezing with chills and consuming with fever. The time passed like an evil dream. It was the custom of the people to pelt with missiles the unfortunate occupants of the stocks. But the natives pitied me, and some of them even gave me tea and food by stealth.

Finally the hotelkeeper, muttering that he didn't want me to "die on him," set me free and ordered the cook to give me the water in which he boiled the rice, so that I would not starve.

The monkey of which I have spoken was a prodigious thief. It stole everything it could lay paws on. It occurred to me that it would be safe for me to steal what food I needed and blame the thefts on the monkey. Thereupon the monkey's pilfering activity doubled, it seemed to its master.

One day the hotelkeeper, missing two eggs, which he had intended for breakfast and which, without his knowledge, were in my pockets, said to me:

"That monkey is a thief."

"He sure is," said I, and stole away to eat my eggs unobserved.

One day several natives, painted hideously, with thorns thrust through their noses, came to the river to trade. They were peaceful, but imagine my feelings, after seeing them eye me hungrily, to be told in a whisper: "Those men are cannibals."

When my health was a bit better I revenged myself on the hotel man by appropriating his canoe one night and paddling away down the river. O'Neil, who had been almost as ill as myself, went with me. We made our way in 15 days to Cantumayo, begging our food as we went. The natives were more than kind to us.

The trip was made hideous by millions of huge mosquitoes which swarmed down on us until our feet and hands were black with the insects. The natives do not even take the trouble to brush them off, but they tormented us terribly. At last, in payment for my repairing her sewing machine, a woman gave us a strip of mosquito netting, which we spread over the canoe at night while we slept.

It happened that the chief of police at Cantumayo was an acquaintance of mine. He permitted me to sleep in the police station and paid for my meals at a neighboring house. The mistress of this house had a mania for medicine and insisted upon dosing me with a horrible mixture until I was sicker than ever.

This decoction was a bowl of strong liquor made from sugar cane, lemon juice and salt. I implored her to give me quinine, but she refused and felt that I had insulted her nostrum. I believe I should have died had I not met an American negro named Tolbit. He gave me a pound, or $4.86, with which I bought quinine and cognac. In four days the fever was broken. Tolbit obtained a canoe (I suspect he stole it) and we floated down the river for seven days, stopping at villages for the nights. But on the seventh night the negro disappeared.

I was picked up by a tall and pompous personage who called himself by the resounding name of Don Pedro Segunda La Jera, and who made an average of $100 a day by selling phony jewelry to the natives. He took me along to paddle his canoe. He was so stingy that he would not permit me to use the condensed milk he carried for his coffee, and refused to pay for the provisions he purchased unless compelled by force. I left him at Porto San Francisco, where I got work cutting down trees for 75 cents a day.

Here I remained 15 days and left only to avoid starvation.

Prospects for the Seventh Annual National Dairy Show, Chicago.

While this event has each year given evidence of its usefulness to the dairy world, yet the rounding out of the seven-year period promises to give to the country one of the most valuable educational shows ever presented. With the thought in mind that the importation of dairy products is growing to a dangerous amount and that present prices and general conditions concerning agriculture in America warrant a tremendous amount of work to stop the terrific drain upon our gold by foreign countries for products we should and must grow at home, the attention of the management has been given entirely to the rendering of practical demonstrations on lines of the maximum of production at the minimum of cost, of dairy products. While features of intense moment on sanitary and hygienic methods will be presented, yet the paramount work of this great educational show is for the farmer.

Matters of breeding and feeding will be presented by demonstration and discussion; the better handling and marketing of dairy products will be discussed—in fact, everything that will tend to aid in profitable dairy farming will be here shown and talked over by the highest national authorities. The machinery department will have many active, interesting and instructive exhibits. It is the intention that every exhibitor shall have an opportunity to display his exhibit, wholly or in part, in active use, thus giving practical demonstrations under expert hands. But the cow and her place upon the farm will be the paramount issue; with $9,000,000 annually being shipped out of this country for dairy products, the cow and how to increase her capacity has the most need of consideration by all patriotic citizens.

No farmer in the middle west, be he already engaged in dairying or not, can afford to overlook this ten-day short course in all that is best for the farm. In fact, this show has assumed a relation with farming and dairying that makes it the annual round-up of all affairs of the dairy world, where show-yard battles are settled for the season; where trades are made and where matters affecting the next year's work are discussed and planned.

The show will be held this year, commencing October 24, in the International Amphitheater, Chicago. While the show is National in name, it will be International in character, as by comparison alone are we able to see what is being accomplished the world over. Some new and useful classes are being added to the classification, which will be ready for distribution shortly. Adv.

Different.

Albert J. Beveridge said in Chicago of a corrupt boss:

"He's very cirtuous—h, very virtuous.

"A millionaire once went to him and said:

"'I want to get in the senate. Will you sell me your support?'

"'No, sir!' the boss answered, striking himself upon the chest. 'No, sir! I'm a free-born American citizen and I'll sell my support to no man.'

"'But,' said the millionaire, blandly, as he drew out his checkbook and fountainpen, 'but, if you won't sell me your support, perhaps you'll rent it to me for the term of this campaign?'

"'Now you're talking,' said the boss in a mollified tone."

Sounds Familiar.

"What did the preacher preach about Sunday?"

"Thou shalt not steal."

"I'm getting tired of that kind of talk. What business has a preacher got mixing in politics?"

How It Happened.

The confusion of tongues had just fallen on Babel.

"We are describing a ball game," they explained.